

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 26, 2006**

Members Present: Morris, Ennis, Carroll, Endres, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Newstadt, Spitzfaden, Thompson, Wasson and Webb

Members Excused: Timberman

Staff Present: Davila

Guests: Richard Citron (VA Medical Center Director), Dean Reid (Veterans Home Administrator), Ron Sarg (MOAA), Dave White (DOL), Sandria Johnson (DSU VUB Program), Angel Fontanez (Opportunity Center), Paul Davis (Federation of Women's Club), and Brian Loomis

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Morris opened the meeting by presenting plaques to past Commission Chairmen, Thompson and Hastings. He announced that the Veterans Home Administrator, Dean Reid, had completed his training.

Mr. Citron announced some new personnel changes. The new Associate Director of Operations is Steven P. Gallerizzo and the new Nurse Executive is Mary Alice Johnson. The new Women's Health Coordinator is Martha Wallin. He reported that they have not yet found a location for the new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Dover. They will be advertising for bids in October to find a location and anticipate opening in late spring or early summer. Now that the new fiscal year is approaching the VA Hospital has had several projects approved: rebuilding of the elevators; a new MRI with a room to house it; and new monitoring equipment for intensive care. Although the new fiscal budget has not yet been approved, based on what has been proposed, he thinks the Wilmington VA Medical Center is looking very good. He announced that they are planning to expand hospital beds and they have been downsizing the medical library and plan to move it to the 6th floor, so they can utilize the 2nd floor for patients. He also announced that they have a new orthopedic doctor that will soon be coming on board full-time.

Mr. Reid announced that the Assistant Director of Nursing and the Social Worker will be coming on board soon. They are currently interviewing for a Hospital Administrator II, an HR Specialist and administrative staff. The fiscal person selected did not accept the position, but they have others to choose from. He reported that the construction of the facility is on time. He also reported on outreach opportunities.

Mr. Sarg announced that the Dover, Delaware Chapter of MOAA has voted to become the official sponsor of the Quilts of Valor Program in Kent County and asked that they be contacted if anyone becomes aware of an eligible individual.

Mr. Davis, in representing his wife, asked for suggestions on how the Federation of Women's Club can be of assistance to the new Delaware Veterans Home. Mr. Davila suggested that he meet with Mr. Reid and himself so they can provide him with some ideas.

Ms. Johnson introduced herself and thanked the Commission for allowing her to advertise her organization in The Centurion newsletter.

Mrs. Fontanez introduced herself and spoke about the Opportunity Center in Dover.

Former Chairman Hastings thanked the Commission for his plaque and commented on the new Veterans Home.

MOTION BY THOMPSON TO ACCEPT AUGUST COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY ENNIS. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Newstadt reported that the Northern Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) will meet on October 17, 2006, 6:00 pm. He is not aware of any major issues, but it has been called to his attention that the new markers are fading. There are no issues from the Southern FACC. He discussed the Cemetery monthly reports.

Mr. Davila gave an update on the renovations at the Northern Cemetery. He also discussed the new Funeral Directors Interment Scheduling (FDIS) program and the new imaging system being installed for storing DD 214s.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Harden reported they have their guest speaker and soloist lined up and they are working on the clergy for the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, 2006.

FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

No report.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Carroll brought up the issue of possible parking problems at the Veterans Home Dedication. As of September 26, 2006, the Veterans Home fund has \$67,657 and the Friends of Veterans Home Fund has \$452,255. Chairman Morris confirmed that as of this time, there will not be bus service provided for the Dedication. Commissioner Newstadt inquired as to the status of the Veterans Home applications and Mr. Davila explained where we are in that process.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Thompson asked the Legislative Affairs Committee to take a look at the word “oversight” in the dictionary and pointed out that it means supervise. Chairman Morris reported that they are scheduled to meet with the Secretary of State on October 4, 2006, right after the Steering Committee meeting, to review what she anticipates the oversight responsibilities to be. He announced that the Legislative Committee needs to attend that meeting. Mr. Davila suggested that if there is any veteran issue that someone is interested in bringing up before the legislators, it should be discussed before January. Commissioner Newstadt questioned the possibility of a third cemetery and Mr. Davila addressed that issue.

PERSONNEL

No report.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

No report.

HOME DEDICATION

Commissioner Harden reported that invitations are being made, the band will be the Milford Community band, the caterer will be All Occasions, the sound system is being secured and the guest list is being updated. Please let Mr. Davila know if you want to invite your national commander or auxiliary president and he will have an invitation sent to them. She reported that the programs are being finalized. There was discussion about invitation protocol and Commissioner Duties.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Commissioner Endres reported on submitting articles to the local newspapers.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Lank (MOWW) – Lt. Mike Wilken of the Wilmington MOWW Chapter is now the Regional III MOWW Commander.

Magner (AMVETS) – Reported that post 100 is getting ready for their turkey season for the VA Hospital.

Carroll (MOPH) – Reported that there will be a Region I meeting outside of Philadelphia on Saturday, September 30, 2006. There will be showings of “The Voices of WWII” on Wednesday, October 4, 2006, 5:30 pm, at the Seaford High School auditorium and on Tuesday, October 17, 2006, 5:30 pm, at the Milton Theater.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Announced that they will have the free dinners at the Golden Corral on November 13, 2006. Any veteran, active duty, Reserve or National Guard member will get a free meal; the free meal is only for the service member.

Thompson (MCL) – Reported that the downstate MCL collected about 300 hard cover books for the Veterans Home library. Both hard and paper back books are being collected for the Home.

Morris (American Legion) – Reported that their new Commander, Don White, had a successful motorcycle run out to Salt Lake City and they raised about \$15,000 for the Legacy Run. Commander White has some very aggressive plans for fundraising in the coming year. Dick Drummond, the past Chaplin for the American Legion, and retiring Adjutant Ed Phillips, were recently honored at a dinner.

Ennis (KWVA) – Reported that they had their Executive Council meeting on September 16, 2006, and everyone was informed as to the progress of the Veterans Home.

Kitson (VFW) – Announced that the Red, White and Blue Gala will be on October 7, 2006. The Gala is a fundraiser for phone cards for the troops overseas and in the hospitals. November 3-5, 2006, is the VFW Military Order of the Cootie Tomb Trek, where the Cooties lay wreaths at the tomb of the unknown. November 17-19, 2006, is the Eastern State Conference, which will be held in Rhode Island.

Harden (WAVES) – Reported that they will have their meeting this Saturday. She announced that Thursday they will be having a ceremony for their new Women’s Coordinator at the VA Hospital.

Wasson (DELVETS) – Informed the Commission that on Labor Day they had their annual picnic and pool closing.

Spitzfaden (MOAA) – Reported that they will have their National Convention on November 15-18, 2006, in Washington, DC.

Newstadt (JWV) – Reported that on September 17, 2006, they dedicated the KIA section of the Jewish Community Cemetery in Wilmington and Senator Carper attend, as well as other officials. There were many improvements made to the section. The 60th Anniversary of the Air National Guard will be on October 14, 2006.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Newstadt mentioned that Dr. Morris Kerstein, Chief of Staff at the VA Hospital, was in a very bad accident. Commissioner Wasson also mentioned that Dave Gillan is moving to New Mexico and will be presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at the next meeting. Commissioner Harden announced that the Commission Holiday luncheon will be held in January instead of December.

COMMISSION CONDUCTED ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Chairman Morris report that the votes were tabulated and verified by the Executive Director and the positions for this coming year will be Chairman - Gary Morris and Vice Chairman - Dick Ennis.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: **OCTOBER 24, 2006 (11:00 AM)**

LOCATION: **Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED